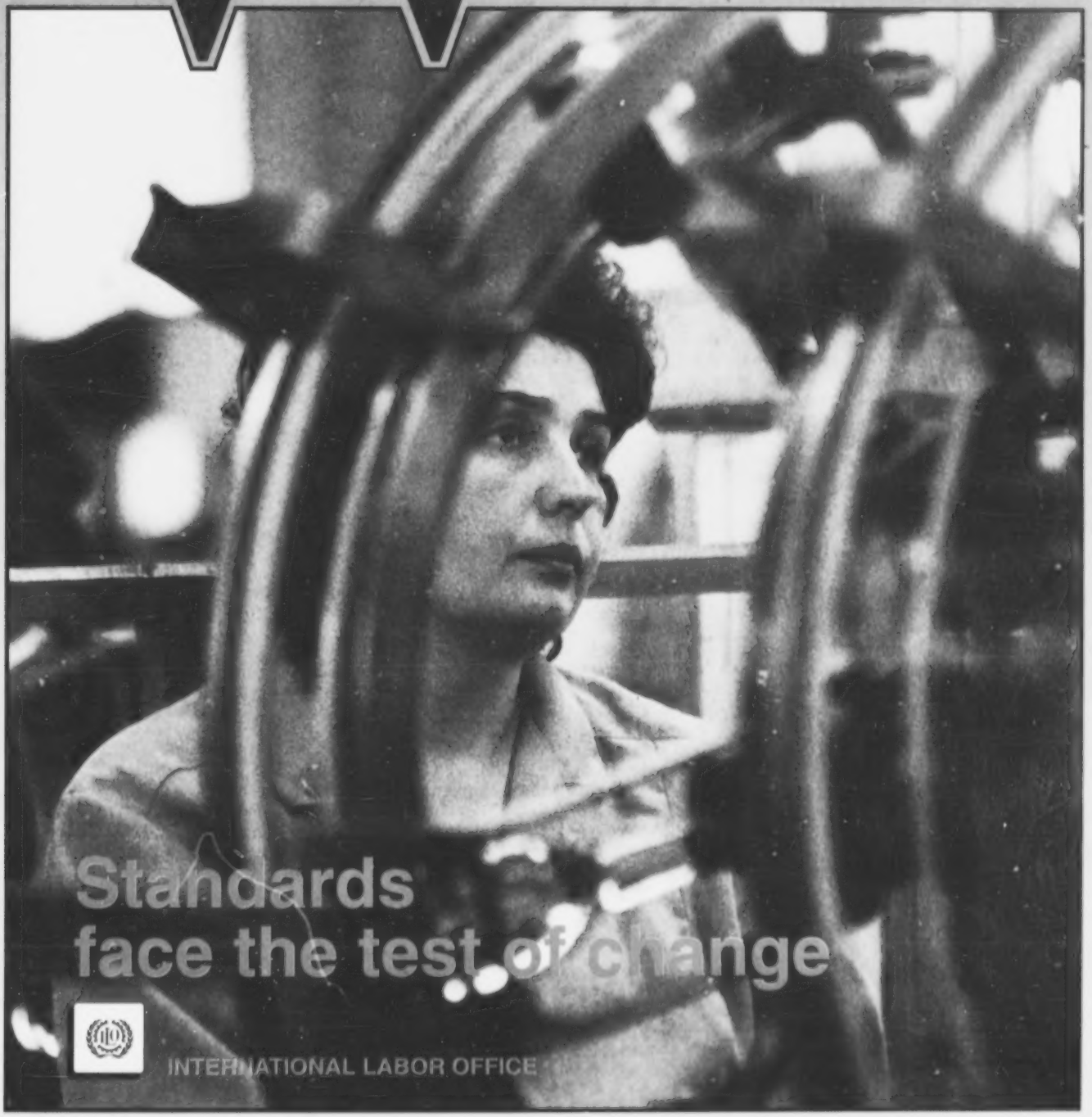
World of Work

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ILO



Standards face the test of change

INTERNATIONAL LABOR OFFICE

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Editorial

Renewal, tradition

With the transformation of *ILO Information* an important new link strengthens the chain of international labor communication: in addition to its specialized publications circulated by subscription, with *World of Work* the ILO now offers a true large-circulation news magazine, a permanent, on-going contact between the Organization and its constituents.

The working world is undergoing enormous transformation under the double pressures of technological change and evolving attitudes. Through its special features on current issues *(Dossier)* and its regular columns the new magazine will try not only to inform its readers but also to transmit in the most interesting way possible the spirit of partnership which permeates the ILO. It is by working together through dialog and co-operation that government, employer and worker leaders will best meet the many challenges of the Year 2000. This renewed and modernized publication intends to provide all possible support in the endeavor.

In this domain as in others, the Office demonstrates its willingness and its capacity to adapt to change. The requirements for the transformation are no different from those the Organization recommends to its own constituents: rigor, creativity, a studied use of modern technology.

Jacques Maillard

In this first issue it may be seen that these are also the requirements being employed, in order to adapt to the demands of the times, by the oldest and most "traditional" of ILO technical departments: that of international labor standards.

I am particularly pleased that in the *Dossier* section devoted to "standards face the test of change," readers may see at close hand the sheer effort of thought required of this department to adapt its activities to meet the needs of the times, without in any way abandoning the principles and practices which have established the reputation of the Office.

Elaboration and supervision of the application of international labor standards are – need it be repeated? – the very basis of the mandate of the Organization, its reason for being, and its greatest success, without doubt. The question which arises is this: at a time when the tendency is to subordinate everything to the law of the market and to competition, should we abandon the objectives of protection and promotion of social justice which underlie the work of labor standards? Quite obviously the answer is, firmly, no.

More than ever, the ambition of the ILO should be to promote in all member States a greatly improved understanding of the requirements of standards, and a much better capacity to put them into practice.

Michel Hansenne
Director-General

READEX
FICHE

Strength through renovation

Head of the ILO International Standards Department, Mr. Hector G. Bartolomei is quite adamant: there is no question of weakening in any way the unique system built up over the decades by the ILO to protect workers' rights and improve their conditions. But adaptations – and indeed innovations – are needed, especially in monitoring procedures, in order to respond to the political, economic, technological and cultural changes taking place as the century draws to a close. Interview.

World of Work: ***In 1919, everything remained to be done. There was hardly any international social legislation. Today, with 173 Conventions and 180 Recommendations to its credit, the International Labor Code is a veritable monument covering virtually the entire social spectrum. Would it now be time for the ILO to take a rest from standard-setting activities?***

H.B.: People were saying that when I first joined the ILO 20 years ago. Yet think how many essential Conventions have been adopted since then. Technological and cultural evolution is constantly throwing up fresh problems for us to face. Look at the industrial disasters of Bhopal or Seveso. No one would have dreamt of internationally legislating on such matters ten years ago. What we have done is to make up the backlog dating from the 19th century. There was no international legislation on freedom of association, for example, but this is, fortunately, no longer the case. Then there are certain existing standards which have become dated and need revising. This will give us plenty of work for many years. We have already made a start by revising the Convention prohibiting night work for women and that protecting indigenous and tribal communities, among others. This means that our standard-setting work has to continue in two directions: the preparation of standards on matters not yet covered, and the revision of obsolete standards.

WW: ***You mentioned cultural changes. Do you think standards should take greater account of the arrival en masse of women on the labor market and their claims for equal treatment?***

H.B.: The first thing I notice is that this arrival *en masse* is a sort of return to the past because, in the early 19th century, there were more women and even children, in fact, working in factories than there were men, and this was precisely because the wages paid to women were lower. One of the achievements of the social movement is to have put an end to this system of wild wage-fixing and exploitation.

But the return of women to paid work, due in large part to post-1945 economic expansion, has taken place under far more favorable conditions. Women are now better educated and better prepared culturally and professionally.

Looking at the body of ILO standards, we see that they make no distinction between men and women. There are some Conventions, indeed, whose aim is to ensure equality, such as Convention No. 100 on equal remuneration or No. 111 on discrimination in employment. It is true, however, that in certain sectors women have been kept in a situation of inequality in order to protect them. The most obvious case is that of the Convention on night work, which has already been revised.

WW: ***In the current changes taking place, what other factors could influence ILO standard-setting activities?***

H.B.: I see three such factors. First there is the breakdown of the Communist system, which constitutes a fundamental change on the international scene. Then there is the adjustment process taking place in developing countries which, in fact, started before the fall of the Berlin Wall. During early phases the social aspect was often considered merely a variant of economic adjustment. Masses of workers became unemployed before any thought had been given to creating systems for their protection. ILO activity, especially after the setting up of the Bretton Woods institutions, provided a possibility of influencing these policies, but we have hardly reached the end of the process. The third and most important factor is the increasing clear predominance of the market economy. Obviously, no one is considering a return to uncontrolled capitalism, and there can no longer be any question of denying the

FACTS AND FIGURES

● The number of member States of the ILO increased from 42 in 1919 to 58 in 1948. The present number of member States is 160.

● Conventions adopted: 16 by 1921; 98 by 1950; 134 by 1970; 173 by 1991.

● Ratifications: 1,000 by 1950; 2,000 by 1960; 5,000 by 1981; 5,562 as of 31 December 1991.

● Since 1964 when records begin on the matter, the number of cases in which progress has been made in the legislation and practices of member States as a result of suggestions of the ILO Committee of Experts totals 1,948.

To achieve rea

Jacques Maillard

equality between men and women at the workplace is one of the priorities of the ILO

advantages of letting people express themselves fully, including in the economic sphere. But the market economy alone is not enough. We need standards guaranteeing a minimum of protection in order that the economy may become increasingly free, without giving rise to excesses or abuses which could trigger reactions dangerous both for the economy itself and for democracy.

WW: ***Do international standards penalize countries which observe them?***

H.B.: To an extent this is true, if the standards are too trifling, but there is no point in throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Could we imagine getting rid of Convention 87 on freedom of association or Convention 100 on equal pay? What is clear is that the excessively detailed standards – which tend to age the fastest – will have to be simplified, preserving the essentials in a new context. Flexible clauses are more widely needed in general.

WW: ***Now there is a suggestion aimed at adapting standards. What other approaches do you think could be envisioned?***

H.B.: One of these would be to design new standards which allow maximum leeway for the social partners to bargain jointly among themselves. We must take care never to create too much red tape, while confirming the role of the State, which is to provide the basis and the framework for such bargaining.

WW: ***The system for monitoring the application of ILO standards is generally considered the most efficient there is, internationally. Does that mean that it is perfect and untouchable, so to speak?***

H.B.: We should first stress that the key to the efficiency of the system lies in tripartism – the fact that employers and workers sit side by side in such important bodies as the Committee on the Application of Standards and the Governing Body's Committee on Freedom of Association. It is thanks to this tripartite monitoring that many human lives are saved, many disappearances avoided, and many arrests reversed.

Having said this, it is true that some thought is currently being given to the matter, but this should in no case result in any sort of weakening of protection. The aim is to improve the system.

For example, as monitoring is based on periodic reports submitted by governments, the increase in the number of member States, of Conventions and of ratifications – over 5,500 to date – has resulted in saturation at all levels, that is to say, for national administrations, monitoring bodies and the Secretariat. The thing we should aim at is a process whereby reports could be sent which concentrate on the significant cases. This would permit us to maintain, even to improve, the quality of monitoring. And other measures are being studied.

WW: ***Does the make-up of the Committee of Experts need reviewing?***

H.B.: Not as regards the political or regional sensitivities it reflects, at any rate. It is a very subtle blend that has taken a long time to perfect. But there is some re-arranging which needs to be done rather quickly to correct the imbalance between men and women. As soon as there is a vacancy, a second woman will be appointed. My ultimate aim is to have at least five women on the Committee of Experts.

WW: ***What about the procedures themselves? the follow-up of complaints? actions taken?***

H.B.: The system has lost much of its momentum and, to an extent, has become rigid. I made proposals to round out the "range" of procedures we have at present. First, to speed up the application of the principle of equality between men and women in the working world, I have suggested setting up a tripartite committee, similar to that on freedom of association, which would deal exclusively with cases where this principle has been breached. Secondly, to solve certain social conflicts within a country or between two countries over matters covered by our standards, I suggest setting up an international voluntary conciliation and arbitration procedure. Where the parties end up in deadlock or involved in a long and purely legal wrangle, they could call for mediation by the ILO, whose authority and prestige are recognized. If the deadlock should continue, the ILO could then play the role of arbiter, or appoint some other arbiter, provided the two bodies agree in advance that they will respect the decision. Other suggestions are in the pipeline.

WW: ***One other aspect of current change which poses problems where the standard-setting activities of the ILO are concerned: the creation of regional economic groups such as the EEC or Mercosur*** (the Latin American common market).

H.B.: Strangely enough, problems may arise from the fact that the countries making up these groups are either very advanced in their social legislation or rather backward. In the case of the EEC, for example, the Community member States tend to want to include some very detailed provisions in our Conventions, drawing on EC directives which are quite unsuited to developing countries. There are also problems concerning the ratification of Conventions relating to areas covered by the transfer of sovereignty. In the case of Mercosur, the original treaty made no allowance for social measures. What we did was to make the member States aware of this aspect so they could take it into account in a manner compatible with the tripartite structure of the ILO. That is what is now happening. ILO technical assistance has been not only requested but also provided and appreciated. The social aspect will henceforth be covered on the basis of ILO instruments.

Indeed, what we need to safeguard and promote in these groups is the active role played by the social partners in all standard ratification and application processes.

(Interview by Michel Fromont)

Second order flexibility

Werner Sengenberger*

Paradoxical as it may seem, labor standards are not a handicap but an advantage, particularly when it comes to making a firm more efficient, an industry more modern, a region more economically viable, and a national economy more internationally competitive. Experience also shows that real flexibility is not quite what it is generally thought to be.

Industrial restructuring do
efforts of imagination and

The 1980s proved to be a period of substantial industrial transformation, most notably in the Northern hemisphere, where the economic giants – the United States, Europe and Japan – entered a phase of intensified competition.

This gave rise to heightened pressures to shift sectoral activities from declining to growing industries, and also to upgrade industry to meet the demand for products of a greater variety, higher quality, shorter life span and with better services attached to them. More than ever before in the history of industrialization, flexibility, adaptability and innovative capacity became the key to good industrial performance.

First order flexibility

In this situation, many people viewed labor standards as obstacles to adjustment, economic growth and employment creation. They felt that it would be easier to impose new employment conditions unilaterally, instead of engaging in lengthy consultations with worker representatives before introducing change. Labor market regulations would impose undue restrictions for the employer, burden firms with adjustment costs, and forestall the re-employment of displaced workers.

Thus, from this point of view, collective bargaining, minimum wages, maximum hours of work, employment secur-ity, social security, and other received standards should be relaxed to provide the firm, or public authorities, more of what might be termed "first order flexibility," that is, freedom from rules and regulations in employing and utilizing their workforces.

Yet, looking into the experience of recent restructuring, there is little evidence that firms, industries or countries which have followed the deregulation approach, or had low labor standards to begin with, turned out to be the more successful ones. On the contrary, it appears that those with more extensive regulation, and better developed industrial relations systems, could cope more effectively with the requirements of change.

Successful restructuring

For example, German steel companies managed to adapt to the declining demand for basic steel by diversifying their businesses towards processed steel products, engineering, trade and services, and redeploying their workforce in the new product areas. Under the system of worker co-determination it proved difficult to dismiss workers, and management was obliged to utilize the workforce in a different manner. Internal restructuring allowed the redeployment of capital and human resources in the same area, a factor of vital importance for the economic stability of the country.

The Swedish shipbuilding industry is another case in point. With a share of 10 per cent of world production up to the 1970s, it was number two in size after Japan. Within little more than a decade, this industry with around 25,000 workers had to be retrenched because of rapidly declining demand, and new economic activities had to be created in the same region. The adjustment was possible only by following a tripartite approach involving the concerted efforts of employers, trade unions and governments at the local and national level.

As a rule, workers who have more employment security will be more co-operative to changing operations; trade unions will be less inclined to cling to job preservation policies; diversified product structures make the firm less vulnerable to particular product and trade cycles, and hence permit more stable employment in the future; and the region will not lose qualified managers and workers. So, finally, firms, workers and regions may prove more adaptable.

Flexible rigidities

Ronald Dore, an astute observer of the Japanese production system, spoke of "flexible rigidities" to demonstrate that large Japanese companies generate strong

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...es not automatically mean unemployment – but it requires serious co-operation.

adaptive capacity – because of, rather than in spite of, their system of life-long employment. Stable employment patterns have become a prerequisite of co-operation, innovation and productivity, which nowadays are central ingredients to sustained competitive advantage.

While protective standards may entice firms to think of better human resource management, public assistance to the firm to improve its adjustment power through broad training and retraining will further ease the way to dynamic efficiency. To elicit vocational training, not just for small groups of qualified workers in large companies, but for large sections of the labor force, and for generating portable skills, some kind of collective arrangement that ensures the approximately equal sharing of costs and risks of investing in such training is indispensable.

The sources of flexibility, then, can be stable employment, well-developed human resources, co-operative behavior, effective conflict resolution, social infrastructure, and economic diversity of firms, regions and national economies. This flexibility may be termed "derived" or "second order flexibility," because it cannot normally be generated by individual firms alone but requires larger social arrangements, laid down by law, or collective agreement, and supported by active labor market policies.

The virtuous circle

Following this logic, one may conclude that the crucial obstacle to mastering restructuring needs is not, as is often stated, that of "over-regulation" of the labor market. Rather, the crux of the matter is "under-development" of the labor code, in the sense that important standards are lacking to attain such second order flexibility. Economic opportunities are maximized when standards of participation, protection and promotion are combined and interact and reinforce each other.

The answer to the firm which feels restrained by employment protection provisions is not to remove such provisions but to enable the firm to become more flexible, and to have means of adjustment at its disposal that provide more stable employment. This way a virtuous circle of security and strength is created.

Of course, not every rule in the labor market is economically beneficial. There are "restrictive practices" impairing efficiency and change. Yet, most often, these emerge precisely when other essential standards are lacking; defensive postures are typically found where workers, or workers' organizations, feel insecure.

The full economic significance of labor standards cannot be discerned from their costs and benefits at the level of the enterprise. Rather, their rationale lies in the fact that they elicit behavior which avoids calamitous side-effects in the labor market as a whole, in the business environment, and on future generations.

The "cheap" means of adjustment, such as wage cuts, reduced employment security and work safety, and limited social security, may turn out to be more expensive if they engender skill shortages, a poor social infrastructure, and antagonistic and "low trust" labor relations. Because labor norms are created in reaction to unsatisfactory social conditions, they have economic wisdom built into them. They strengthen, rather than weaken, markets.

** Head of program, International Institute of Labor Studies, Geneva.*

FURTHER INFORMATION

The International Institute of Labor Studies of the ILO is currently carrying out two research projects which underline the importance of international labor standards and of social policy in general in the context of current transformations in the world economy.

- *The first, which combines analysis, new conceptualization and policy guidelines, examines ways in which labor standards can create economic opportunities and a business and social environment favorable for comprehensive and sustainable development.*

- *The second, involving discussions of a panel of employers' and workers' representatives and ILO officials, explores the extent and characteristics of the globalization process, its effects on labor standards, and policy perspectives and choices in response to perceived trends.*

International Institute for Labor Studies, ILO, CH 1211, Geneva 22.

An instrument of development

Leonardo Leonardi*

More and more countries are calling on the ILO to help them implement international labor standards. In accepting this "inevitable frame of reference," they recognize that economic progress is inseparable from social justice.

In his report to the 79th (1992) session of the International Labor Conference, ILO Director-General Michel Hansenne stated that international labor standards provide "a setting conducive to development."

The idea of this "conducive setting" is basic. It elicits essential questions as to the sort of development mankind expects on the eve of the 21st century. Will we be able to find and follow the path to a better future for all?

We must certainly admit that, since the beginning of the 20th century, all progress has been accompanied by simultaneous advances in the economic and social spheres. The ILO was created for this purpose in 1919 and, as international labor standards developed, contributed to establishing social justice, which is the guarantee of a stable balance and hence of durable development.

Currently, ever more developing countries and those undergoing economic and social restructuring are calling on the ILO to join them in a spirit of active partnership in applying the standard-setting and technical experience of the Organization to the search for solutions to the problems which beset them.

It was this that prompted some 15 governments attending the meetings of the Committee on the Application of Standards of the International Labor Conference last June to turn to the ILO for help in solving the problems they were having in applying ratified Conventions relating, for example, to work inspection, child labor, freedom of association, social security and the rights of indigenous peoples, and to ask the ILO for assistance in meeting various formal commitments. The Committee in turn took the initiative of offering its help to some ten other governments.

Meanwhile, the representatives of many Central and Eastern European countries confirmed that they found ILO standards and technical co-operation of great interest in connection with their social and economic restructuring plans *(see box)*.

The Latin American countries shared these concerns in regard to the free trade zones or markets they are setting up. Also, certain Asian countries are working regularly with the ILO through seminars, workshops and the like, in order to make international labor standards better known

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Improving working conditions and protecting the most disadvantaged groups is to guarantee a social stability which alone can assure sustainable development.

in their areas and to discuss nationally the prospects for ratifying those standards in accordance with their level of development.

Valued help

At the request of governments, employers or workers in many countries throughout the world, the ILO is already helping in the application of standards or considering the conditions under which such help can be provided. In one East African country, for example, after having sent a tripartite mission to evaluate the effectiveness of labor inspection there, the ILO was entrusted with a major technical cooperation project aimed at improving the performance of that mission and hence the application of the Conventions that country had ratified. At the same time, the country will be helped to establish the conditions necessary for the ratification of the relevant ILO Convention.

During the 1980s one West African country embarked on a process of economic adjustment. A recent study showed that the conditions imposed upon it had had considerable social consequences. In order to temper the impact of this as far as possible in terms of loss of jobs, recycling and amendments to the labor law, a number of the parties concerned finally decided to apply to the ILO for technical assistance and the application of its standard-setting principles and particularly its tripartite approach.

The same is true of a Central American country, also engaged in a structural adjustment program, where the ILO has been asked by the government to conduct a survey with a view to coping with the social problems resulting from the new economic policy.

The result of consensus

What interest could governments, employers and workers in sovereign nations possibly have in involving an international organization in their internal affairs? How can international labor standards contribute to the economic and social development of the countries concerned?

The specific role of such standards is to provide a frame of reference which, as the outcome of a well-tested and accepted method, is the only one really viable.

This framework is provided by the cooperation of the three parties directly concerned (governments, employers and workers) in setting the objectives of the social policy to be applied and the means of achieving it. This covers such areas as freedom of association, equal opportunities and pay in employment, human resource development, industrial relations, and the regulation of working hours and night work, to mention only a few examples.

These are the real problems that all countries have to face within the context and conditions of their national sovereignty. Time has shown that the framework provided by international labor standards is the only viable method precisely because the three parties agree to recognize it and because they bring to this consensus all their practical experience of working life.

The true value of international labor standards lies in their practical effects: on the one hand they reflect what has already been achieved, while on the other they indicate the direction of social and economic progress. The long-term effects of international labor standards are guaranteed by international commitments and by a system for monitoring, in the case of ratified Conventions. Nevertheless, even unratified Conventions and Recommendations have provided guidelines that have been frequently and voluntarily followed in establishing national policies.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that more and more countries are showing interest in ILO standards, are undertaking to apply them, and are asking for technical assistance as they do so. There can be no doubt that ILO standard-setting activities will develop still further in the years to come. ⌟

**ILO official, International Labor Standards Department*

EASTERN EUROPE: URGENT NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL LABOR STANDARDS

In the current turbulence in Eastern Europe, governments of the emerging national states rely on international labor standards to guide them in the process of democratization and change to a free market economy. There are two central preoccupations: to guarantee democratic consultation as opposed to authoritarian rule, and to preserve social stability.

As Mr. Andris Berzinsh, Deputy Minister of Welfare, Labor and Health of Latvia, told the 1992 International Labor Conference, in these circumstances "the process of tripartite negotiations – the basic principle of the ILO's activities – is bound to develop.... That this is the right approach was evident to us already this year when we succeeded, through negotiations with the parties concerned, in averting sharp social conflicts and thus ensuring some movement forwards.

"In our view, this movement calls for the effective introduction into our lives of yet many international norms and standards, and this endeavor is being carried on. Fundamental changes have been introduced in labor legislation, and in this process the international standards of the ILO have served and continue serving us as universal indicators, with which thinking and action are to be consequently aligned."

The extent of the problems facing the emerging States was also summarized in part by Mr. Vjatcheslav Kebitch, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus: "...in spite of all the difficulties which have arisen, we cannot afford to ignore the need for social protection for the most vulnerable sectors of society, that is the unemployed, women, the young, the elderly, and those unable to work, since what is at stake here is democracy itself and political stability."

Other representatives of Central and Eastern European countries expressed themselves in a similar vein.

Various new member States of the ILO have confirmed that they continue to be bound by the Conventions ratified by their predecessor States, for example, Azerbaijan with regard to the 50 Conventions ratified by the former Soviet Union, and Slovenia for the 76 Conventions earlier ratified by Yugoslavia. Lithuania has confirmed the ratifications it had made in the inter-war period, and a whole range of further Conventions are being translated into the national language for ratification by parliament.

Simultaneously with the proclamation of the Declaration on the restoration of the Republic of Latvia as an independent State in May 1990, Parliament ratified eight fundamental ILO Conventions (Nos. 87, 98, 100, 105, 111, 122, 135 and 151). In addition, parliamentary commissions have now dealt with the issue of reviving 17 Conventions ratified by Latvia up to 1940, and have also examined and prepared for further ratifications. Various other Eastern European States are at present seeking the ILO's advice in order to draw on international labor standards in reshaping their social legislation and practice.

Social justice and economic growth

Ashraf W. Tabani*

Social justice cannot be attained if economic growth and business prosperity are neglected or ignored. A ranking management official reminds us that international standards must reflect reality.

International labor standards, which now comprise 173 Conventions and 180 Recommendations adopted by the ILO since its inception in 1919, have exercised significant influence on labor legislation and social policy throughout the world. These standards aim at achieving the objective of "social justice" as a condition prerequisite for the establishment of universal and lasting peace as spelt out in the preamble of the Constitution of the International Labor Organization.

Over a period of 73 years, international labor standards have been set in areas of working conditions and environment, industrial and non-industrial occupations, industrial workers' welfare and labor inspection, industrial relations, employment promotion and labor statistics. The combined impact of these standards is that the worker's right to work has been secured and the employers have been obliged to ensure that conditions are promoted to safeguard this right.

Workers' accountability

However, international labor standards do not create any complementary obligation on the part of the workers to link their performance to the growth of the enterprise. This absence of an element of accountability on the part of the workforce has created an imbalance between the workers' right to work and the employers' right to manage. Particularly in the developing countries, employers have been vocal in recent years in demanding that international labor standards be either reviewed or brought into conformity with the economic needs of the developing world.

Coupled with this imbalance is the fact that the economic, financial and technological gap between North and South is widening, along with income inequalities within individual countries of the developing world. Their competitiveness in the wake of growing economic challenges posed by the developed countries vis-à-vis their own compatibility to overcome the barriers of poverty, unemployment, population growth and environmental pollution has placed the developing countries in a situation where economic development has become a paradox and the very concept of social justice seems decidedly precarious.

Social justice without economic growth?

Throughout the developing world, it is difficult to overlook an almost lyrical propagation of the laudable sentiment regarding "social justice" generated by the application of labor standards. However, in terms of implementing this sentiment, we need to appreciate that whereas a poor country can have economic growth without social justice, it is not possible to have social justice without economic growth. Any attempt to achieve the latter amounts to putting the cart before the horse. Since one cannot distribute more than one can produce, the developing countries can only distribute poverty unless they can generate requisite resources.

The ILO cannot help the developing countries in generating their abundant human resources towards productive utilization if its standards are so strongly tilted towards the workers without making them accountable for their economic obligations. The developing countries cannot ignore the need to concentrate on overall economic development. They cannot afford the cost of providing social justice to a segment of their working population by applying labor standards to the detriment of the teeming millions among their population who are unemployed and are denied even the basic right of survival.

It will only be in the spirit of the standard-setting process that an effort is now made by the ILO to review existing standards with a view to introducing a balance between the rights and obligations of workers and employers. Apart from making an effort to achieve this balance, it is also necessary to adopt employment-oriented labor standards which can help in increasing productivity and efficiency, link wages with productivity, promote an attitude of accommodation rather than confrontation, promote work ethics based on a code of conduct and discipline, bring a change in management and union leadership styles, facilitate technological innovations and work study methods, and, finally, suggest bilateralism over tripartism as a means to develop mutual trust and confidence. Such a process will help to narrow to a minimum the gap between the rights and obligations of the workers and the employers.

By narrowing this gap, the ILO can provide a link between the standard-setting process and the development pace of the new democracies, thus responding usefully to their need for economic competitiveness. ⌟

*Ashraf W. Tabani is President of the Employers' Federation of Pakistan and a member of the Governing Body of the International Labor Organization.

Jacques Maillard

Universality is imperative

Willy Peirens*

For this trade union officer, the end of East-West tensions and the political, economic and social reforms now taking place greatly increase the chances of seeing ILO standards understood and applied in a truly international way. But great care and vigilance will be required.

As trade unionists, we are convinced that ILO Conventions and Recommendations are destined to become the reference points for change throughout the world in years to come. At least they should do, and for several reasons.

First, international labor standards are the only way of ensuring balanced and long-lasting development. Market economy and political democracy are not, in themselves, synonymous with justice or social harmony. Reforms must draw on the underlying values and concepts of labor standards if they are to have the support necessary for their realization and bear fruit.

Unfortunately, this requirement is not sufficiently understood by many countries, including the industrialized countries and certain international institutions. Promotion of freedom of association, tripartism, the guarantee of a minimum wage and the application of labor standards in general are all too often considered hindrances to be avoided by political and economic decision-makers. The risks are thus high for a breakdown of the development process and for political democracy itself being called into question.

In its last report the Committee of Experts on the Application of ILO Conventions and Recommendations considered that "the social dimension is a condition essential to the success of structural adjustment" and that a broad social dialog was a decisive factor in the effectiveness of employment policies. We in the labor movement share this viewpoint.

Secondly, failure to respect, or to respect fully, international labor standards, generally indicates that democracy is working badly, or is merely a facade. Discussions at the latest ILO Conference showed there is a close relationship between the efforts of certain States to limit the application of standards and the infringement, open or latent, of certain basic principles such as freedom of association or the right to collective bargaining.

The uses of tripartism

These infringements, often camouflaged by complex legislation, could escape the supervisory mechanism if it were based on government reports alone. Fortunately, tripartism permits the true situation to be revealed as, increasingly, employers' and workers' organizations make their comments or air their grievances to the ILO experts.

Like the trade unions themselves, employers and governments are by and large in favor of universal application of international labor standards. Therefore we should join forces in finding ways of enhancing the efficiency of the supervisory mechanism, in order to improve the impact of standards in the field. This will be all the more essential as the number of ILO member States increases and problems related to work and the organization of work become more complex.

With all this, there is still no lack of cause for concern.

For purely economic reasons, some countries are opposed to the principle of universal application of standards and fight against the existing supervisory mechanism. They are creating export zones and special conditions for areas of activity from which collective bargaining and trade union freedom would be practically excluded. The 1992 Conference vigorously criticized such an attitude.

The principle of the rigorous and universal application of standards is threatened also by positions adopted by representatives of the employers' group when the Conference discusses specific problems of application. The current interpretation by the experts of the right to strike, for example, is systematically questioned, and the governments of certain countries seize the opportunity to contest the experts' opinions on other Conventions.

Despite these problems, the trade union movement is confident of the future of international labor standards. They are a sure refuge for workers and their families, and they should play an increasingly important role in the economic and social development of people everywhere. ⌟

*Belgian worker delegate and Workers' Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations of the 79th International Labor Conference, 1992.

Construction: a high-risk sector

Falls of workers or materials, human error in equipment handling, high levels of noise and vibration, exposure to dangerous products – each year thousands of workers are involved in worksite accidents in the construction sector. With ever-increasing human as well as financial costs resulting from accidents, both public authorities and the social partners have a common stake in improving occupational safety and health.

Construction remains one of the most dangerous of sectors from the standpoint of workplace safety and health.

Calculations in the United Kingdom for the construction industry reveal that one worker is killed every three days on average and 59 workers are injured each day. Employing less than 10 per cent of total European Community wage-earners, the construction industry is responsible for 15 per cent of total work accidents and 30 per cent of all fatal accidents in the industrial sector. In Brazil, of four million construction workers, 250,000 were seriously injured and 2,000 died on the worksite during 1990 alone.

Even more disturbing, the rate of frequency and gravity of accidents is on the rise in this sector. In France, for example, the number of serious accidents recorded in 1990 was some two per cent higher than in 1989, and the number of fatal accidents increased by nearly 12.5 per cent. The cost of these accidents is considerable. In the EC countries the overall cost of accidents is estimated at more than three per cent of turnover.

Dangerous work

The first obligation of all those involved – public administrators, employers' and workers' representatives, occupational safety and health specialists – is to understand the causes. Most of the risks faced by construction workers are well known. They derive from the very nature of activities in this sector and from the structure of the enterprises involved.

Despite changes in methods and techniques, falls of persons and objects remain the chief cause of serious accidents. Roof work is especially hazardous, and the fatality rate of falls in the erection of scaffolding is high.

Growing mechanization adds to the danger. Rough terrain, poor site layout, limited visibility and high levels of noise and vibration create risks in the use of motorized equipment. Operational errors in the use of lifting appliances of greater size and variety are another cause of accidents. Special safety problems also arise in demolition, in the use of electrical installations, and in exposure to dusts, dangerous products and radiation.

The proliferation of small enterprises militates against the growth of safe working practices: financial means are often limited, access to proper training is difficult, and widely varied conditions from site to site impede the application of safety policy and complicate inspections.

The transient nature of construction sites together with high labor turnover hinders efforts to create safety consciousness and organize safety measures. Exposure to weather and diversity of trades and occupations are additional problems, as is the system of contracting by competitive bidding, which may open the door to tendering for methods of work that are cheaper but less safe.

Widespread risks lie in the massive use of seasonal and migrant labor, unaccustomed to an industrial environment and often given arduous and dangerous

U.S. CONSTRUCTION DEATHS EXCEED THOSE IN ALL OTHER INDUSTRIAL SECTORS

In the United States construction workers are victims of more job-related deaths than workers in any other major industry. According to the National Safety Council, 2,100 U.S. construction workers were killed on the job in 1990, the most recent year for which statistics are available.

In addition to deaths, construction workers in 1990 experienced 210,000 disabling injuries at work. With the total cost of work deaths and accidents estimated at nearly $64 billion for all U.S. industries in 1990, the estimated cost per death amounted to $730,000, and $23,000 per disabling injury.

The National Safety Council considers that the true cost to the economy, to employers and to workers of work-related deaths and injuries is much greater than the cost of workers' compensation insurance alone, and includes insurance administration, wage losses and medical costs, as well as uninsured costs.

In every year over the past decade, U.S. construction deaths have exceeded those in all other major industrial sectors, registering a high of 2,400 in 1985.

work. In many European countries the construction industry employs from 10 to 30 per cent of all foreign workers; in Switzerland, including seasonal workers, this figure is even higher. In developing countries the migrant workforce may also include women and children living at the construction site.

Involved since its inception in the campaign for workplace safety, the ILO has doubled its efforts in the course of the last few years to promote safety and health in the construction sector. A new ILO code of practice on safety and health in construction* is the latest element in the body of work now at the disposal of member States in this crucial area.

A practical guide

Published as part of the International Program for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (PIACT), the new safety code is designed to serve as a guide for all those responsible for occupational safety and health in construction: authorities and official services, specialized organizations, enterprises, safety and health committees, employers' and workers' organizations. It is an indispensable complement to the Convention and Recommendation on Safety and Health in Construction adopted in 1988 by the International Labor Conference. It will also serve as an aid in the practical activities carried out by the Organization as part of its technical co-operation programs.

In addition to specific technical considerations (scaffolds and ladders, lifting appliances, hand tools, excavations, tunnels, demolition) the new code of practice delineates the general duties regarding safety and health of the competent authorities, the employers, the workers, self-employed persons, designers, engineers and architects.

Client responsibility

But the new code also outlines the safety and health responsibilities of construction clients, who should "co-ordinate or nominate a competent person to co-ordinate all activities relating to safety and health on their construction projects," inform contractors of special risks to safety and health of which they as clients are aware, and require contractors to make provision for the cost of safety and health measures in submitting their bids.

Health hazards, first aid and occupational health services are spelled out in ten sections which include dangerous atmospheres, radiation hazards, noise and vibration, and biological agents, among others. There are also concluding chapters on information and training, and reporting of accidents and diseases.

The 12th Session of the ILO Building, Civil Engineering and Public Works Committee will further examine problems of occupational safety and health in this sector and will be held on 2-10 December 1992 with worker, employer and government representatives attending from 40 developed and developing countries.

R.G. ⊐

Jacques Maillard

The erection of scaffolding is one of the most dangerous activities in the construction sector.

**Safety and health in construction: An ILO code of practice.* Geneva, 1992. ISBN 92-2-107104-9

Social security: the crisis in figures

Even if they are difficult to establish – which delays their publication considerably – comparative international statistics are important tools for policy makers and researchers. The ILO has just published such statistics concerning the evolution of the cost of social security throughout the world.

Almost everywhere since the beginning of the 1980s, the financial resources available for social security, which vary considerably in different parts of the world, have had a tendency to stagnate, even to decline.

For example, in countries as different as Australia, Brazil, Denmark, El Salvador, Israel, Jamaica, Luxembourg and Venezuela, total expenditure for social security expressed in percentage of GNP declined, in some cases greatly, between 1980 and 1985, whereas only slight changes, progression or decline, are to be noted over the entire period 1970-1985 *(see table)*.

Of 111 countries for which comparable figures were available to the ILO, 82 (33 African countries of 33, 25 American countries of 27 and 16 Asian countries of 19) devoted less than $400 per inhabitant to social security expenditure in 1986. Only 11 countries – all in Western Europe – spent more than $2,500 per inhabitant, and six of these spent more than $3,500. Norway headed the list with $4,920. These figures are to be found in the ILO's 13th periodical survey on the receipts and expenditure of social security schemes and was recently published under the title *The Cost of Social Security*.* It gives results up to the year 1986. The length of delay of publication is explained by the amount of time needed to assemble and study statistics from all over the world, bearing in mind the structural differences between social security systems.

This unique study, which makes comparisons possible between industrialized and developing countries, is invaluable for researchers and social security officials in all countries.

The scope of the inquiry covers statutory social security schemes which include compulsory and voluntary social insurance schemes, universal non-contributory schemes, national provident funds, national health services, special schemes for public employees, public assistance, and schemes for war victims.

Other key features of the evolution of the cost of social security during the last two decades:

- **The percentage of GDP allotted to social security** shows the regional disparities: of 103 countries for which 1986 data were usable, 69 devoted less than 5 per cent of GDP to social security expenditure: 29 African countries of 29, 19 American countries of 25, 18 Asian countries of 21, 1 European market economy country of 17, and 2 countries of Oceania of 4. Four Western European countries – Denmark, France, Norway and the Netherlands – spent over 25 per cent of GDP on social security benefits.
- **The average annual social security benefit expenditure per inhabitant** shows, in addition to the tendencies already mentioned, that in 1986 such countries as Canada, Ireland, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States belonged to the group "$1,500-2,500," far behind the majority of Western European countries, particularly France and Germany. However, the table published here shows a steady progression of percentage of expenditure for the United States and Japan.
- **The diminution of the rate of increase,** which reflects, among other things, the various measures taken to keep the cost of social security under control, is noticeable in such countries as Australia, Denmark, Israel and New Zealand, but also in Germany, France and the Netherlands. In certain developing countries, particularly in Latin America, one may discern the price being paid for structural adjustment.

Benefit expenditure as percentage of GDP

Country	Year				Average annual rate of increase (%)		
	1970	1975	1980	1985	1970-85	1975-85	1980-85
Australia	6.4	8.1	10.9	9.9	3	2	-1.9
Brazil	4.8	4.4	5.1	4.5	-0.4	0.2	-2.5
Czechoslovakia	17.9	17.1	18.9	20.8	1	2	1.9
Denmark	14.5	19.7	26.2	25.2	3.8	2.5	-0.8
El Salvador	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.1	-1.9	-1.7	-4.7
France	13.9	20.7	25	27.3	4.6	2.8	1.8
Germany FR	16	22.6	23.1	23.2	2.5	0.3	0.1
India	1.1	1.5	1.5	1.5	2.1	0	0
Israel	6.5	9.5	13	12.7	4.6	2.9	-0.5
Jamaica	0.6	1.1	1.3	1.2	4.7	0.9	-1.6
Japan	4.8	7.9	10	11.1	5.7	3.5	2.1
Luxembourg	14.4	20.3	23.5	22.5	3	1	-0.9
Netherlands	18.3	24.7	27.3	28.2	2.9	1.3	0.7
New Zealand	9.9	14.3	17.3	17.6	3.9	2.1	0.3
United States	7.9	11.2	11.8	12	2.8	0.7	0.3
USSR	12.1	13.6	14.2	14.7	1.3	0.8	0.7
Venezuela	1.1	1	1.1	0.9	-1.3	-1	-3.9

**The Cost of Social Security. Thirteenth international inquiry, 1984-1986.* Comparative tables. ISBN 92-2-006430-8.

Working World

RATIFICATIONS

❯ **Chile** now ends a 20-year phase during which it ratified no international labor conventions. In July 1992, Ambassador Ernesto Tironi submitted to

ILO Director-General Michel Hansenne the instrument of ratification of Convention 144 on Tripartite Consultation (International Labor Standards). Chile will also organize consultations between the Government, employers and workers aimed at improving respect for international labor standards in the country.

❯ **Mexico** was the first State to ratify ILO Convention No. 170 guaranteeing safety in the use of chemical products at the workplace. Adopted in 1990, this Convention aims to prevent and reduce the frequency of industrial disease and accidents resulting from the use of chemical products. The Convention will come into effect 12 months after registration of a second ratification.

LEGISLATION

❯ **Pakistan** has adopted a law prohibiting servitude for debt, after several decades of deliberation. Some 20 million Pakistanis of a population of 115 million were forced to work to repay debts which often increased over time, condemning entire families and indeed generations to servitude. Henceforth creditors who include a servitude clause in a loan contract can be severely punished, with up to three years' imprisonment.

❯ **The Dominican Republic** has a new Labor Code since May. Prepared in close collaboration with ILO experts, the Code was adopted after consultations with employers and workers. It should have a noticeable effect on freedom of association, which has been much flaunted in recent years, particularly in the free trade export zones. That situation has given rise to regular complaints to the ILO.

❯ **Hungary** has a new Labor Code that thoroughly alters the representation and participation of workers in enterprises. It establishes the principle of multiple trade unions and freedom of affiliation. Collective bargaining will play a pre-eminent role in the settlement of disputes and will lead to the conclusion of collective agreements even at individual plant level. Employers will also be entitled to organize themselves into free associations.

❯ **Paraguay** is also preparing to revise its Labor Code following the adoption of a new Constitution containing a great number of social provisions. The Government has called on the ILO to provide technical assistance in drafting its Freedom of Association Bill, while the laws prohibiting the right to strike have already been repealed.

UPHEAVALS

❯ **The countries of Southern Europe** are going through a period of tension between governments and trade unions. Economic difficulties and the demands made by the creation of Europe are forcing these countries to carry out painful austerity programs. **Portugal** is preparing drastic budgetary cuts and the trade unions are opposed to the revision of the right to strike and of the public service sector. In **Spain**, the declining labor market, the limitation of the right to strike, unemployment benefits and the restructuring of the steel industry are the main causes of conflict. After a general strike in May, it is proving difficult to return to the negotiating table. Strikes are increasing in **Greece** in protest at the raising of the retirement age, the increase in social contributions and the job cutback in the public sector. Finally, in **Italy** the trade unions have had to give up sliding wage scales because of the demands of a strict wages policy.

❯ **In Africa** the reform of the Labor Code is a subject of friction between trade unions and governments in various countries. One area of contention is the prior administrative authorization which is required before workers can be dismissed for economic reasons and which financial experts want to see shelved. The **Mali** National Workers' Union has managed to ensure that it will be consulted on any reforms. In **Senegal**, the trade unions have been mobilized on the same issue and the question has also been raised in **Burundi** and **Burkina Faso**.

❯ **In North America**, U.S. and Canadian trade unions have condemned the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement between their two countries and **Mexico**. The AFL-CIO and the Canadian Labor Congress consider that the agreement will be disastrous for employment, wages and the environment. The Agreement was far more favorably received in Mexico, where it is expected to provide 600,000 new jobs, and by employers in all three countries.

Jacques Maillard

Japan is currently reducing the working day. This is one of the results of the "Shunto" or annual round of collective bargaining. As corporate profits are down, wage and salary increases will be 4.9 per cent, 0.7 per cent less than last year. But trade unions and employers agreed to a progressive reduction in working time, from just over 2,000 hours annually at the present time to 1,800 hours in a few years. The Government set the example by granting some 500,000 civil servants a five-day week as of last May.

INITIATIVES

❯ **Tunisia** intends to create 320,000 new jobs under its VII Plan between 1992 and 1996, during which period 420,000 persons, including 313,000 young workers, will be entering the labor market. Planners are counting on a 6 per cent growth rate, dynamic exporters and aid programs to help small enterprises and national regional worksites. For the first time special attention is being paid to developing the western part of the country, which until now has been neglected in favor of the coast.

❯ **In France**, the Union of Metallurgical and Mining Employers has launched a vast operation to attract school-leavers. Employers in these industries are having to face a shortage of skilled labor and, together with parents and teachers, are suggesting to groups of older students that they visit their factories and work at a job which introduces them to a product, a trade, a company or a manufacturing technique. In one year the program has involved 4,000 students, nearly 50 per cent of whom were girls.

This page was prepared with the collaboration of the *Social and Labor Bulletin* of the ILO

Ethiopian women cast off their burden

Poor countries often have to choose between survival in a hostile environment and conservation of their natural resources. It is not impossible to reconcile the two if the people concerned help to find solutions and make them work.

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world, belonging both to the least developed countries and to those most seriously affected by the sharp rise in oil prices in the mid-1970s. For about 95 per cent of its energy supply, Ethiopia depends on biomass: wood, crop residues and cattle dung.

Addis Ababa, the capital, requires large amounts of fuelwood to satisfy energy needs. Women and children carrying branch-wood and leaves into town on their backs supply about one-third of demand. In spite of the extremely arduous work involved, they have very low incomes and are among the most disadvantaged groups of society.

The cost of survival

Lacking other means of transport, they walk an average distance of 12 kilometers with a load of 35 kilos on their backs. Most complain about chest and back pain and have deformed spinal columns. The incidence of miscarriage among women fuelwood carriers is 40 per cent in the age group 35 to 44 years.

Sixty per cent of the women carriers are heads of households. Fuelwood carrying is their major source of income, bringing in the equivalent of some US$20 per month, on which an average family of five members attempts to live.

Their situation is further aggravated by the semi-legal or illegal status of fuelwood gathering, which exposes wood carriers to harassment from forest guards, peasants and criminals through attempted confiscation of their loads, beatings, or even rape. To avoid these risks, many women work at night or in the early morning hours.

The fuelwood carriers' lack of an alternative livelihood contributes to the depletion of the forests surrounding Addis Ababa. Forced to take whatever fuelwood they can get, the women unknowingly contribute to an inefficient use of scarce forest resources. Though most of the forest around Addis Ababa is included in a large-scale World Bank-financed project which has been successful in improving the condition and the size of the forest, the women fuelwood carriers have not been integrated into the project.

Together with the National Urban Planning Institute the ILO has completed a project designed to fill this gap. The project set out to develop measures to help alleviate or resolve the conflict between basic needs and forest resources conservation.

Self-help and participation

Four self-help groups, each of which now has about 160 members, were set up in neighborhoods with a concentration of fuelwood carriers. These groups went through a program of communication training and problem analysis. They then proposed possible measures to solve their problems.

The aim was to find alternative em-

ployment. The project assisted by arranging training, obtaining equipment and acquiring land for such alternative income-generating activities as spinning, weaving, basket-making, grain-grinding, soap-making, vegetable farming and beekeeping.

While project experience suggests that alternative sources of income can be found, it is also clear that these will have to be followed up by a lasting solution to the environmental problems. Unless the carriers are integrated into forest management and harvesting in an orderly and legal way, intolerable working conditions and forest degradation will continue, because new women will take the place of fuelwood carriers transferred to other jobs.

The project therefore actively pursued discussions with governmental and other organizations which led to the formulation of a two-part strategy of developing alternative jobs and making fuelwood-carrying part of sustainable forest management. To guarantee the continuation of this strategy, a follow-up project increasing the number of women who will benefit has just been started up with the collaboration of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the financial assistance of the German Government.

H. V. R. ❑

MANAGING FORESTS MORE EFFECTIVELY

For several years, the ILO has been seeking to integrate environmental protection, especially of forests, in its technical cooperation programs. Examples:

● In Mali, an ILO project has led to the creation of a viable method of cultivating and protecting the forests in the southwest of the country, with the active collaboration of the surrounding populations.

● In Fiji, a forestry code has been drawn up to restrict commercial use of wooded areas and a lumber school has been established.

● In Pakistan, the ILO has collaborated in a program combining improved productivity of forests with more effective ecological management.

News flashes from a continent between hope and uncertainty

Latin America is emerging from a decade of crisis and the serious consequences may be seen, particularly at the level of consumer purchasing power and social protection; but encouraging signs are also visible: production is recovering, unemployment is beginning to decrease. A few facts and figures follow:

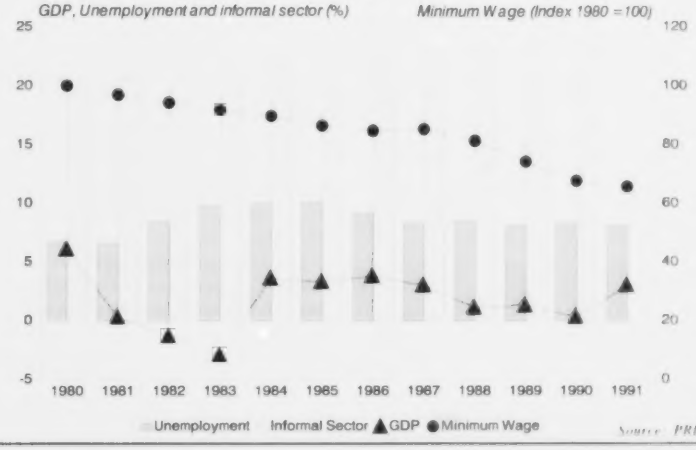
- In 1990, for the first time in ten years, a net inflow of resources amounting to $6.7 billion was achieved.
- Despite clear recovery, per capita GDP fell by 9.1 per cent in 1991 from the 1980 level.
- During the 1980s debt servicing reduced export earnings by one-third on average.
- In 1991 the real value of the minimum wage was almost a third of what it was in 1980.
- The unemployment level in the region is generally down: 8.1 per cent in 1991 as opposed to 10.1 per cent in 1985.
- Chile had the most spectacular decrease in unemployment: from 20 per cent in 1982 to 7.3 per cent in 1985.
- The number of workers employed in the informal sector rose from 16 million in 1980 to 28 million in 1990.
- In most countries in the region the social security systems suffered financial crisis and problems of Organization.

These figures appear in documents published by PREALC (the ILO regional employment program for Latin America and the Antilles) and the ILO report prepared for the 13th Conference of American States Members of the Organization, which was held in Caracas, Venezuela, from 30 September to 7 October 1992.

At Caracas, government, employer and worker delegates of 33 countries of the region discussed means to remedy the negative effects of structural adjustment and possible reform of social security systems. Emphasizing the importance of democracy and social dialog in the development process, they asked the ILO to heighten its involvement in the effort to promote workers' rights and to mitigate the possible social consequences of privatization and deregulation measures.

The Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Michel Hansenne, assured delegates of the support of the Organization, particularly in regard to participation of the social partners in negotiations for and implementation of economic reform programs.

Output, Unemployment, Minimum Wage and Informal Sector, 1980-1991



Helping people mind their own business

Woodworkers, basket-makers, tailors, potters, jewelry makers, fisherfolk: from Costa Rica to Guatemala, all across Central America, men and women are hard at work improving their living and working conditions through small private enterprises. The ILO helps them to train, re-train, organize, and find new outlets for their products.

The obstacles are enormous. If you have nothing, or very little, to start with – except for good hands and a good brain – the banks won't lend you the money.

In so many kinds of manufacturing, however small the scale, the competition is fierce, whether *their* products are made down the road or imported from a cheap labor zone overseas.

And then there's the family to worry about: the father, the mother, the grandparents, the brothers and sisters, the grandchildren.

Perhaps that's where it starts: family and community solidarity. All over the world people facing economic crisis and poor job prospects are going into small businesses for themselves – with a little help from their international friends – to meet the specific needs and specific demands of their communities. And they're putting other people to work in the process.

Initiative and know-how

In Central America, local wicker-ware or solid-wood furniture production for the local market, or decorative products in wood and embroidery for the tourist markets, are only a few well-known examples. One entrepreneur visited by *World of Work* near San José, the capital of Costa Rica, was teaching young workers to weave and wind the wicker strips around the iron bars that make the modern chairs and tables strong. Another, much younger craftsman, half way across the country near the Pacific Ocean, at Puntarenas, worked entirely alone, making traditional homemade furniture and making it all fit together without nails.

In San Ramón, Costa Rica, one large family – member of the Asociación Profomento de Proyectos Productivos (association for the promotion of productive projects), one of many micro-enterprise organizations throughout Central America – manufactures clothing for men and women in bright local colors, as well as blue jeans with certain "Latino" features which compete on the international market. The small factory provides jobs for a number of local people.

Another family concern in the San Ramón area manufactures ladies' cosmetic products using only natural ingredients. They proudly display their own brand of wares and a spick-and-span production facility. This micro-enterprise also provides local jobs for others.

The potteries? Well, the potters in San Ramón and in Puntarenas must also supply the local as well as the tourist markets. Some make their own moulds by hand, others purchase them ready made. Pots, bowls, cups, black bulls and religious statues – all are designed to meet the demands of local markets and foreign visitors. The hand-crafted enamel jewelry is particularly impressive and obviously requires quite a lot of skill.

Fishing is still another interesting family enterprise, particularly on the Pacific Coast.

All sorts of farming and small manufacturing enterprises complete the list. There are literally hundreds upon hundreds of micro-enterprises in Central America, as a result of loans and expertise available through programs of technical assistance. In some areas the associations and co-operatives can no longer keep up with the requests for aid.

At the present time the ILO has three key projects providing assistance to Central American micro-enterprises: one in Honduras, one in Costa Rica and one for the region. Funded by the United Nations Development Program and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, these projects are designed to improve employment and income of micro-enterprises in the informal sector (urban and rural) and facilitate financing. They also offer technical, professional and management training.

Particular efforts have been made to facilitate access to credit for the self-employed and for micro-enterprises through democratization and modernization of national financial structures. Projects provide repayable credit funds with significant contributions from the governments concerned; credits are distributed through "private development organizations," which can extend financing to many thousands of micro-enterprises, including small businesses, the majority of which are run by women.

Special agreements have also been made with local banks for management of credit funds and use of bank financing for micro-enterprises. The ultimate goal of the projects is development of autonomous financial institutions, private or semi-public, which would be able to finance themselves and sustain and develop the micro-enterprise programs.

The ILO projects are designed further to improve employment opportunities and incomes of vulnerable groups, particularly women workers, and to ensure that experience and training gained in the projects will later on be utilized by the governments concerned with the technical assistance of the ILO.

Organization is basic

People operating their own small private enterprises organize themselves in order to improve their living and working conditions by increasing incomes and levels of production. Being organized in associations also allows them to have access to credit and savings programs, to purchase basic commodities at favorable conditions and at advantageous prices which they could not obtain as individuals, and to set up a variety of other services which allow them to devote more time to production and to improving the quality of products and services.

Organizations of micro-enterprises also provide training to meet the demands of increased markets and new outlets. Such organizations reaffirm the basic social values of local populations and enable them to be represented in and negotiate with other economic agencies and institutions.

One of the main goals of organizations of micro-enterprises is to establish commercial associations which will provide them with goods and services and market their production; this in turn implies the elimination of the traditional middleman, so that more of the income earned returns to the entrepreneur.

In addition, organizations of micro-enterprises can respond to the invasion of local markets by imported products, and direct market attention also to customers who do not want to buy or at least do not know local products, through national and Central American fairs and campaigns promoting home-grown and home-made local wares – normally of better price and better quality than the mass-produced stuff you buy in the stores. ⌟

Text and photos:
Rodger Goodson

THE FIRST CENTRAL AMERICAN CONFERENCE

The first Central American Conference on Micro-enterprises, organized by the ILO, the Honduran Fund for Social Investment, the United Nations Development Program, and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, took place in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in March-April 1992. It brought together micro-entrepreneurs from Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala for the first time, as well as government, workers' and employers' representatives, private development organizations, and researchers and international organizations working in the Central American region.

The central theme of the Conference was "Developing organization and self-help in micro-enterprises in Central America." The theme was developed through presentation of the experiences of representatives of regional micro-enterprise organizations, complemented by the commentaries of technicians and specialists in the micro-enterprise sector.

Conclusions covered ways to strengthen organizations of micro-enterprises, apply technology, provide training, conduct representation and negotiations, and operate marketing associations.

The second Conference, which takes place in San Salvador in February 1993, will consider the formation of a Confederation of Micro-entrepreneurs.

Women at work: on the roof of the world

Poor economic development is usually accompanied by under-utilization of human resources. In the traditional rural society of Nepal, rare are the women who have any vocational training, or a paying job. But tourism may be putting an end to all that.

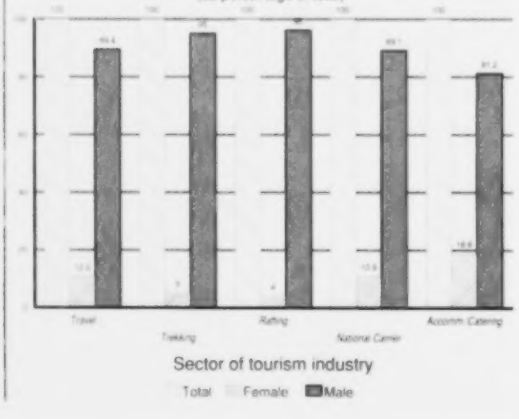
To develop a form of tourism that is a part of sustainable development which respects nature and local traditions: this is the challenge confronting Nepal, like many of the countries rich only in their landscapes and their customs.

Since the tiny country opened its doors to the outside world in 1951, more and more foreign visitors have discovered the magic of the Himalayas and the villages clinging to the mountainsides. The local population has not received a great deal of benefit from tourism so far, however: in 1990, while the number of tourists increased by 6.2 per cent over the previous year, foreign exchange earnings went down by just over 16 per cent.

An evaluation of participation of women in tourism shows them to be still generally excluded from most jobs. A recent survey of the hotel and catering business reveals that only 18.8 per cent of the workforce is composed of women. And women's employment in other areas of tourist activity is even less. In all, women make up only 17 per cent of workers employed in the tourist industry in Nepal.

Nepal Tourism Industry Employment

Proportion of male versus female employment by sector (as percentage of total)



Women entrepreneurs

As in all traditional rural economies, women in Nepal are expected by and large to do the housework and are restricted to non-paying jobs. With their clear abilities in all areas of tourism, this is a rather obvious waste of the human resources of the country.

However, today, on the trekking routes of Nepal, many of the tea shops, lodges, restaurants and handicraft shops are being run by women. The Sherpa and Gurung women who are often found managing these establishments in the Annapurna and Himal areas and on the flat plains of the Terai regions along the Indian border, are keen to improve the profitability of their ventures and are open to good training opportunities when they are offered.

It is thus necessary to encourage jobs for women in the tourist sector, not only to offer more varied services, better adapted to demand, but also to increase incomes at the local level and an improvement in the standard of living of rural families.

This is the government of Nepal's objective in a technical co-operation project being carried out by the ILO and financed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The basic aim is to develop women's enterprise in the tourist sector and to train women entrepreneurs in all areas of tourism.

Varied training

The factors which prevent women from receiving the training and education they need to find jobs in tourism are complex and interconnected but certainly not insurmountable. Socio-cultural taboos, a literacy rate for women of only 15 per cent, lack of accredited skills and financial resources, legal barriers to property ownership and lack of confidence, are some of the more recognizable barriers perceived to be operating against women.

While trying to help viewpoints to evolve, the project also provides diversified training to women and young girls. A mobile training service now regularly travels the trekking trails, organizing on-the-job training and specialized courses

in hotel management, food production, sanitary conditions, accounting, and so on. Tour organizers have already pointed out noticeable improvements in sanitation in lodgings offered, as well as in the quality and the variety of meals.

Women will also soon have access to entrepreneurship training, which will include business planning and management, feasibility studies and advanced vocational training.

In addition to this training, indispensable to the success of their enterprises, credit is available through the project to village women if the banking system cannot accommodate them, and trainers are on the spot to offer business advice and counseling when needed. ⌟

ELSEWHERE IN ASIA

Training men and women in the hotel and tourist trades is not only to improve the capacity for welcoming visitors as a potential source of foreign exchange, but also to offer a new chance to categories of workers most often disadvantaged: young workers, women, migrants....

This is why the ILO is helping developing countries to acquire training facilities necessary in the hotel and tourism sectors.

In the Asia-Pacific region, projects are currently being carried out in Bangladesh (a hotel school), China (a training institute), Indonesia (on-the-job training), Nepal (two projects including the one described in this article) and Sri Lanka (a hotel school).

Photo: ILO

AROUND THE CONTINENTS

▲ **HUMAN RESOURCES:** With ILO support Asian countries are undertaking considerable efforts to improve the quality of their workforces at all levels. Since its beginning in 1987 the Asian Network of Human Resource Development Planning Institutes has been involved in an intensive exchange of information between more than 100 institutes in 12 countries. The network also organizes regional workshops, training courses and the exchange of technical expertise; it is engaged in surveys and research and publishes a quarterly bulletin and a bibliographical series at country level. The ILO's Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion (ARTEP) serves as secretariat for the network.

▲ **EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY:** Financial assistance from UNDP had enabled the ILO to start up two projects for disabled people in Jordan and Yemen, giving them better chances to find paid employment. Among the achievements of the projects are the improvement of services at the Rehabilitation Center of Sana (Yemen) for slightly mentally retarded and deaf persons, the extension of two centers in Jordan and the creation of placement services. Future activities in both countries should focus on setting-up corresponding services in rural areas and promoting more positive attitudes towards the disabled within the population.

▲ **WOMEN AT WORK:** Deregulation trends on Latin American labor markets and growing numbers of women working in the informal sector without legal protection were major concerns of a tripartite regional seminar in Montevideo (Uruguay) last summer. The seminar was the highlight of a project designed to improve the regulation of women's work in Latin America. It recommended the establishment of tripartite national bodies to promote and watch over equal treatment in employment. Another ILO project in the region wants to foster the entry of women into management. Twenty employer organizations in 18 countries will participate in this project.

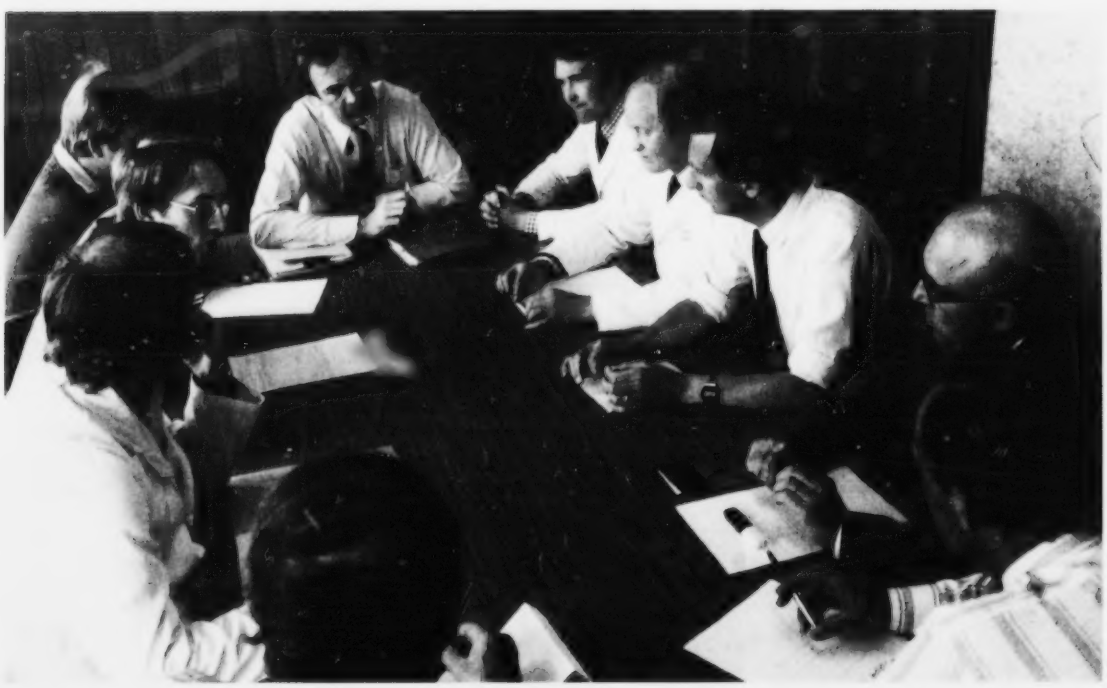
▲ **INDUSTRIAL SAFETY:** Each year one million people in the Third World suffer from pesticide poisonings, while 20,000 of them die, reports a recent edition of the *African Newsletter on Occupational Health and Safety*. The bulletin appears regularly within the framework of an ILO project fighting professional hazards in Africa. Other articles dealt with noise reduction and new approaches in establishing health services at work. Furthermore, together with CIS (International Occupational Safety and Health Information Center) the ILO has published a practical guide to facilitate exchange of experience and allow the establishment of similar centers at the national level in Africa.

▲ **VILLAGE ENTERPRISES:** Village enterprises in China have developed more liberal industrial policies. They now provide employment for over a 100 million persons in the rural sector and regularly register double-digit figure increases each year. While rural industry accounted for only 3 per cent of the total industrial output in 1971, the share of village enterprises alone now attains 35.6 per cent. Lacking qualified staff and modern technology, however, these enterprises face serious problems. With the financial support of UNDP, the ILO has started a pilot project in the coastal area of Central China to remedy these problems and to build up managerial competence. Follow-up activities in other areas of the countries are planned.

The German model of workers' participation

Johannes Schregle*

At a time when the European countries consider how to harmonize their industrial relations policies, a specialist examines the "German model" of employee participation, now 40 years old. A highly informative study, though the model is not readily transferable to other countries.



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Forty years ago, in 1952, the Works Constitution Act was promulgated in the then Federal Republic of Germany. It was the result of many decades of efforts by the German trade unions, which had never seen their role limited merely to fighting for better working and living conditions and higher wages, but had also been attempting to obtain a share in the power and responsibility of enterprise management.

These efforts, which go back to the post World War I period, were renewed during the years following World War II, a period marked by German economic revival and reconstruction and political democratization. The unions' objective has been "industrial democracy". The slogan is "democracy must not stop at the factory gate". This idea is expressed in the title of the 1952 Act which implies that, like the constitution of a democratic State which defines the rights and obligations of the citizens and the government, an enterprise should also have a constitution, defining the functions of employer and workers and replacing the autocratic management of the past.

To attain this objective in a spirit of co-operation rather than class struggle, two institutions were created which determine labor relations in German enterprises to the present time. First, there is the works council, which consists of workers' representatives elected by all employees whether they are union members or not, and which has certain rights and duties of information, consultation, negotiation and co-determination on clearly specified matters of management decision-making in the social, personnel and economic fields. These rights and obligations are defined in great detail by legislation.

Second, trade unions have been striving to obtain the inclusion of workers' representatives in the supervisory boards of larger companies which had traditionally consisted of shareholders' representatives. German supervisory boards are situated somewhere between the general assembly of shareholders and the management board which is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the company. The supervisory board has three main functions: it elects the management board, supervises its activities, and decides on major issues of corporate policy (investment or closure of larger operations, for example), in accordance with the internal rules of the company. Workers' members have the same rights and functions as shareholder members. In accord with the "industrial democracy" philosophy the trade union objective has been parity representation of capital and labor on the supervisory boards.

First stages

These two institutions – works councils and workers' representation on supervisory boards – are distinct from one another and from the unions, but in practice unionists are often works council members, and both works council members and union leaders sit on supervisory boards. Both institutions were first introduced by law in the early 1920s. The evolution since then has consisted essentially in an extension of the functions of works councils and an increase in the proportion of workers' members compared with shareholders' members on supervisory boards.

Under the 1920s legislation, supervisory boards had to include one or two works council members. The decisive breakthrough occurred after 1945 when, under pressure from the British military authorities, parity was introduced in the supervisory boards of the German coal, iron and steel companies. This was confirmed by the German Co-determination Act of 1951, which provided for five representatives each of shareholders and employees on the supervisory boards (with a neutral "11th man") and the inclusion, on the management board, of a labor director who could not be elected without the majority of the workers' members of the supervisory board. Since 1951 the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB) has tried to extend the co-determination scheme of the coal, iron and steel industries to other sectors of the economy.

However, the Works Constitution Act, adopted one year later (in 1952), fell short of union expectations. The Act gave works councils far-reaching rights to participate in major management decisions concerning social and labor matters, but did not extend works councils' co-decision rights to economic, financial and production decisions. It also fixed the number of workers' members on supervisory boards at one-third, the other two-thirds being members elected by the shareholders.

Equality in action

The next step was legislation which gave co-determination the form which it still has today. In 1972 the Works Constitution Act of 1952 was amended, extending and strengthening further the co-decision rights of the works council in practically all labor and social matters.

After heated political debate, the Co-determination Act of 1976 introduced the principle of parity of shareholders' and employees' members on supervisory boards in companies employing over 2,000 workers in industries other than coal, iron and steel (to which the 1951 Act continues to apply). However, the 1976 Act contained three qualifications of the parity principle. First, among the workers' members there must be one representing employees holding managerial positions (a stipulation opposed by the unions, who contended that these representatives, though counted as employees' members, would in all probability vote with the shareholders). Second, in the case of disagreement the chairman of the board will be elected by the shareholders' members. Third, in a tie in voting in the supervisory board the chairman has two votes to break the deadlock. All these provisions were adopted against the opposition of the unions, who saw in them a violation of the parity principle.

In practice, both employers' organizations and trade unions are satisfied with the concept of works councils and their significant contribution to constructive labor-management relations. The practical functioning of supervisory boards under the 1976 Act is also widely accepted.

Not, alas, transferable

The German system of co-determination is the result of specific historical circumstances and is therefore not transferable to other countries, although it has aroused much interest abroad. This interest has grown in connection with efforts made in the European Community to harmonize the industrial relations systems of the member countries and to create European corporate law. However, the differences between the European countries are such that no "European" solution to workers' participation has yet been found. The Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, adopted in December 1989, merely states that "information, consultation and participation for workers must be developed along appropriate lines..." *(see box)*.

To give more concrete effect to this general principle, the EC Commission has worked out a Draft Directive on European Works Councils which says that in Community-scale undertakings a European Works Council must be established with the objective "to improve the provision of information to and consultation of employees". Such councils or similar bodies have recently been set up in a number of companies that have operations in several European countries. Examples are the European works councils for Volkswagen, Elf-Aquitaine and Airbus Industrie, as well as the "European social dialog assembly" of the French-based multinational Saint-Gobain and the world council of trade union representatives of Thomson Consumer Electronics.

"Information, consultation and participation for workers must be developed along appropriate lines, taking into account the practices in force in the various member States. This should apply especially in companies or groups of companies having establishments or companies in two or more member States of the European Community."

Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, Article 17

All these institutions represent the interests of the employees working for the company in different countries. They serve as channels for information, consultation, discussion and dialog between labor and management. In spite of the name "works council", these bodies are very different from the German works council as defined by the Works Constitution Acts of 1952/72. But German thinking and experience will continue to influence the European debate on suitable approaches to increased participation of workers in enterprise decision-making.

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* *Former Director of the ILO's Industrial Relations and Labor Administration Department*

Shipowners and seafarers target drug abuse

As a result of a recent ILO initiative, maritime companies and seafarers' trade unions are together tackling the problems arising from the abuse of drugs and alcohol in the industry.

Drug and alcohol abuse affects all areas of society, but the maritime industry has unique characteristics which require special consideration. Many of these characteristics have existed from the days of sailing ships, while others are the result of changes in technology and shipping operations which have added new challenges to seagoing life.

Modern cargo ships spend long periods at sea. Seafarers suffer from isolation, loneliness and boredom. Opportunities to go ashore have been curtailed, especially as a large number of modern port terminals are located far from urban areas, in places where public transport is scarce or non-existent.

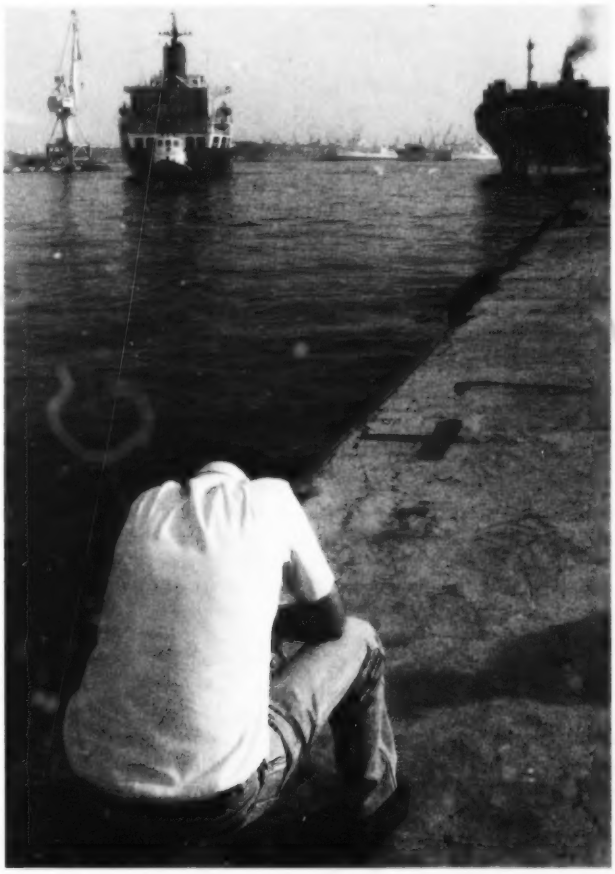
Changes in technology and the nature of the shipping business have led to new pressures on seafarers which may further increase their susceptibility to drug and alcohol abuse. Additionally, the number of seafarers on a given ship has been reduced dramatically, which has decreased opportunities for companionship while at sea and therefore led to further isolation.

One of the responses to major maritime accidents which have been linked to excessive use of alcohol or drugs has been increased pressure – both commercial and legal – on shipowners and seafarers' trade unions to address the safety problems related to substance abuse. Some governments are requiring drug – and even alcohol – testing on their national flagships and placing new requirements on ships of other nations when those ships are in their waters.

Trade unions and individual companies are in many cases developing their own drug and alcohol programs. But clearly these efforts would benefit from the knowledge and insight gained from "exemplary" programs, carried out in different parts of the world.

With its long history of employer-worker co-operation, the ILO is particularly well-suited to serve as a forum for discussion of the important and sensitive issues of drugs and alcohol in the workplace.

At the request of the ILO's Joint Maritime Commission, composed of 20 shipowners' and as many seafarers' representatives, the ILO has set up a program specifically tailored to the unique problems of the maritime industry in co-operation with other United Nations agencies and in consultation with employers' and workers' representatives. The United Nations International Drug Control Program has agreed to provide funds.



Jacques Maillard

During an Inter-regional Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Drugs and Alcohol in the Maritime Industry, held recently in Geneva, the participants identified the main problems and issues, drafted guiding principles on drug and alcohol policies and programs in the maritime industry, and provided guidance for the ILO prevention and assistance program.

This will involve the development of educational and other materials for use by shipping companies, trade unions and maritime training institutions to prevent drug and alcohol abuse and to assist seafarers who already have such problems. The material is to be field-tested in selected shipping companies and, following the necessary adaptations, made available to all interested parties in the maritime sector. ❑

Jacques Maillard

Side by side on the job but not equal: doctor and nurse

Health care deserves better treatment

Although by far the majority in health services, women health care workers still do not have equality of opportunity and treatment. Public and private employers and trade unions should work together to improve the situation quickly, a recent ILO tripartite meeting concluded.

- In the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania and Sweden, over 80 per cent of the health sector workforce is women.
- Although there has been some improvement, women by and large remain in a narrow range of low-status jobs with low pay and poor working conditions.
- Complete withdrawal from paid employment is often the only option open to women employees who cannot secure working arrangements which allow them to combine work and family responsibilities. The health service in the United Kingdom, for example, loses an estimated £1.2 billion annually in expertise as 30,000 women leave the nursing profession each year.
- Pay differentials generally reflect the low value placed on health work largely done by women. In Denmark, for instance, nurses and laboratory technicians take 16 years on average to reach the net salary level attained by physiotherapists and psychotherapists in just half that time.

Participants in the first session of the Standing Technical Committee of the ILO for Health and Medical Services agreed that real equality has not been achieved and that economic factors have caused further difficulties in many countries where governments have emphasized cost containment and public-spending reductions. They felt that joint action by the social partners could be decisive in making progress in this area, particularly regarding employment, career development and training.

Equality of opportunity in employment cannot be assured without recognising and acting upon the fact that women frequently have additional family responsibilities, the meeting noted. The provision by public and private employers of quality and affordable workplace or community-based child-care facilities, and family-leave provisions, constitute critical elements in attracting and retaining qualified women in their respective occupations.

More horizontal, co-operative and community-based structures may permit greater women's participation in decision-making and open more career paths. Programs to promote women may prove effective if implemented in agreement between the social partners.

In order to make the best use of human resources, greater access of women to education, training and vocational guidance should continue to play a major role in improving equality of opportunity in health services. Governments and private employers should design and implement training and retraining programs targeted to the special needs of women health workers, especially those with multiple functions in rural areas of developing countries and those returning to the paid workforce after career breaks for family reasons.

The meeting also discussed the elimination of unjustified disparities in evaluation, promotion and salary, improved work schedules, and sexual harassment, as well as ratification and application of the relevant ILO Conventions. ⊿

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **23-27 November, Islamabad (Pakistan): Asian Regional Seminar on Children in Bondage**
- **24-26 November, Barbados: High-level Symposium on Challenges to Labor Administration in the Caribbean**
- **24 November-3 December, Dhaka (Bangladesh): Sixth Asian-Pacific Regional Seminar on National and International Labor Standards**
- **2-10 December, Geneva: Building, Civil Engineering and Public Works Committee (Twelfth Session)**
- **7-11 December, Arusha (Tanzania): JASPA Regional Meeting of African Employment Planners**
- **14-18 December, Vienna (Austria): Technical Committee Meeting on the Revision of the Basic Safety Standards for Radiation Protection**
- **19-28 January 1993, Geneva: Fifteenth International Conference of Labor Statisticians**

The timeliness of the ILO

Yvon Chotard

The ILO has an impressive image throughout the world and is increasingly called upon to assist workers, employers and governments in all areas of its competence. But one question becomes increasingly pertinent: what role will the Organization play in the new integrated international system presently envisaged? Mr. Yvon Chotard, French Government representative to the ILO Governing Body, was chairman of the Governing Body from June 1991 to June 1992 and here discusses the issue in some detail.

My national responsibilities, in addition to my functions as Chairman of the ILO Governing Body, led me to visit four of the five continents last year.

These were exceptional opportunities for judging the credibility of our Organization and for checking that the lines of action defined correspond precisely to the needs and requirements of member States.

Last March at the proposal of the Director-General the ILO Governing Body defined three priorities. The first consists in supporting the democratization movement taking place throughout the world, remembering in so doing that democracy must ensure social dialog between the independent components of each State and that the ideal form of such dialog is tripartism. The second priority is vigorously to continue the struggle against poverty which, as far as the ILO is concerned, means fighting to increase employment, especially by promoting manpower retraining, often rendered necessary by the economic situation. And the third priority is a reminder of a permanent objective, that of providing every form of protection for workers, starting with various forms of social security.

I referred to these three priorities during all the interviews I had with Ministers of Labor and the other social partners. I can assure you that they were well received as a present statement of our aims, but in obviously different national contexts.

In countries facing economic crisis or structural adjustment – with or without help from the IMF – it is obvious that the call for aid from the ILO is all the more urgent in all areas, with perhaps somewhat more priority for manpower training. This is the case in many African countries which are, moreover, worried that many investors could abandon them in favor of Eastern Europe. I was particularly struck by the difficulties and courage of a country such as Mali, which is having to cope with the needs of privatization without any means of retraining people who have been put out of work.

With respect to Central and Eastern Europe, my visits to Hungary, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia confirmed that the needs are immense and that they are not limited to any one activity. In most cases, a whole body of social law has to be evolved, with all the corresponding structures. It is in such countries we realize that the ILO has the expertise to offer, but that the means of implementation are often lacking.

Moreover, one of the areas where ILO expertise is recognized and demanded is precisely that of social security. This is a problem affecting all countries including the industrialized countries of Western Europe. Obviously systems vary widely, but they are all in a state of crisis, and it is no accident that the ILO, in the same year, is organizing a colloquium on the subject in Geneva for the industrialized countries and another in Buenos Aires for Latin America.

I happened to be in Argentina at the time the Government presented its plan for reform which did not, it appears, meet with the approval of the trade unions. They called on the ILO for its expert advice, and I was able to see that the local ILO procedures ran smoothly. No judgment was pronounced on any given Government project other than for an expert consultation, thus leaving open the way for discussion and for any of the parties to file a complaint if deemed necessary. That is what in fact happened in Argentina and in Bulgaria.

The present timeliness of the ILO also depends on the programs we offer. The assistance program for children, financed by a generous donation from Germany, is a magnificent example. I had a chance to talk to the Governor of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, where the problem of homeless children is particularly acute.

Apart from being useful, programs of this type also help enhance the perception of the ILO throughout the world. Indeed, this is what I was told by a Japanese official during my visit to Tokyo, when I asked him what Japan expected from the ILO. He answered, "First and foremost, that it opens us up more to international co-operation".

That could be a conclusion. But it is rather more a question that has become particularly relevant in 1992. What role does the ILO have to play in the system of international organizations? This is a two-edged question:

– There is the European aspect of relations between the ILO and the EC which, far from being a theoretical or legal matter, is thoroughly practical concerning the ratification of certain Conventions.

– Then there is the universal aspect. Mr. Boutros Ghali, the new UN Secretary-General, when opening the Economic and Social Council session in New York in July 1992, confirmed this by saying "Development, a collateral of security, must be planned globally and integrated into a single action".

This awareness on his part may be a source of satisfaction for us all, but we should also stop and ask again what role the ILO is to play in this integrated system.

The answer to this question – as to that which preceded it – certainly shows the timely relevance of the ILO, but also indicates the vast scale of the task before it. ❑

This page is open to all participants and observers within the world of work who wish to express a personal point of view on any subject of interest to the ILO.

New titles

In print

■ **World Labor Report 1992.** Human rights at work, employment, labor relations, social protection and working conditions. Vol. 5.
ISBN 92-2-107410-3; ISSN 0255-5514. Priced 20 Sw.frs.; US $16.
This Report reviews a wide range of subjects covering human rights at work, employment, labor relations, social protection and working conditions. It includes a statistical annex and special features on child labor, flexible working time, and the social consequences of the transition to a market economy in Eastern Europe and the former USSR. *(Also published by the ILO in French and Spanish.)*

■ **Introduction to work study,** edited by George Kanawaty, fourth (revised) edition, 1992. ISBN 92-2-107108-1. *37.50 Sw.frs.; US $30 (hard cover).*
This highly successful book, widely recognized as the best introduction to the subject for practitioners, teachers and students, has been thoroughly revised to take account of recent developments in methods of operation and work. New techniques in production management, work measurement and work organisation are covered. Reference is made throughout to the use of information systems and computerization to solve work study problems. The emphasis has been changed to cover not only "machine shops", but also process industries, services and office work. *Previous editions published by the ILO in French and Spanish; translated into Arabic, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, Greek, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Thai, and Turkish.*

■ **Major hazard control: A practical manual.** Second edition, 1990. *ISBN 92-2-106432-8; 45 Sw.frs.; US $36.*
Fires, explosions and the release of toxic gases can cause deaths and injuries to workers and the public and adversely affect the environment. Disasters that have come to be known as *Basle, Bhopal, Flixborough, Mexico City* and *Seveso* have given rise to the term "major hazards". The prevention and control of such hazards have become a subject of public discussion in all parts of the world. This comprehensive, practical manual is a response to that pressing issue. *Also published by the ILO in French and Spanish. Translated into Chinese, Hungarian and Russian.*

■ **International labor standards.** A workers' education manual. Third (revised) edition, 1990. *ISBN 92-2-106445-X; 17.50 Sw.frs.; US $14.*
This book provides a brief but thorough introduction to the formulation, adoption and application of internationally agreed standards of good practice in labor matters - international labor Conventions and Recommendations. It is intended for trade unionists, students and the general reader interested in labor matters, social issues and human rights. *Also published by the ILO in French and Spanish. Translated into Arabic, Slovak and Russian.*

■ **The cost of social security. Thirteenth international inquiry, 1984-86.** Comparative tables.
ISBN 92-2-006430-8; ISSN 0538-8295 (Trilingual: English/French/Spanish) 70 Sw.frs.; US $56.
These inquiries present a consolidated statement of the financial operations of social security schemes world wide, and provide an international comparison of the data under review. This volume contains two comparative tables, national accounts data, population data, consumer price indices and exchange rates...
(See article page 14)

■ **Management self-development.** A guide for managers, organizations and institutions, by Tom Boydell. Management Development Series, No. 21
ISBN 92-2-103958-7; ISSN 0074-6703. 35 Sw.frs.; US $28.
Experience shows that the best managers are not those who have been sent on numerous training courses, but those who, on their own initiative, take every opportunity of increasing their knowledge and of modifying their behavior in order to work more successfully with others, for their mutual benefit. *A training video based on this book is available from TV Choice Productions Ltd., 80-81 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4AA, United Kingdom. Also published by the ILO in French. Translated into Italian, Polish, Spanish and Thai.*

■ **Productivity management: A practical handbook,** by Joseph Prokopenko
ISBN 92-2-105901-4 (hard cover) 40 Sw.frs.; US $32.
No company or Organization can continue to exist unless it maintains a competitive level of productivity. Companies which do not succeed in this are doomed to fail through stagnation and then bankruptcy. Productivity is the most important long-term resource, not only for the success of organizations and individuals but also for national economic and social development. It is also a measure of the efficiency of managers. *A training video **Quality in the job** based on this book is available from Gower Training, Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 3HR, United Kingdom. Also published by the ILO in French and Spanish. Translated into Arabic, Chinese, Czech, Bahasa Indonesian, Italian, Russian and Turkish.*

On film

VIDEO FILMS: The ILO Audiovisual Unit regularly produces video material on subjects related to the world of work, including stories based on ILO's technical co-operation projects around the world. Videos are available either in three-minute format for TV news programs or in more detailed 10-minute versions. All are available in English, some in a French version as well. Some recent ILO videos:

- **Philippines: the other volcano** (child labor in Manila)
- **The White Menace** (rehabilitation of drug and alcohol addicts in Southern Africa)
- **In Search of the Yeti** (training in tourism in Nepal)

For more information contact Miguel Schapira or Elizabeth Poss, Bureau of Public Information, ILO, 4 Route des Morillons, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. Tel.: (022) 7996575; (022) 7997949; fax: 0041 22 7883894.

On disk

ILOLEX, the ILO's new computerized database on CD-ROM, contains the texts of the International Labor Organization, in English, French and Spanish, pertaining to international labor standards. Each language version includes ILO Conventions and Recommendations as well as the reports of the principal committees responsible for monitoring their application. It is a particularly valuable tool for researchers, social policy makers, lawmakers and institutions. Through text searching, ILOLEX provides rapid answers to such questions as: which ILO Conventions and Recommendations concerning occupational safety and health provide protection against toxic substances and agents? or which ILO instruments promote the employment of women? *To order: Kluwer Academic Publishers Group, Order Dept., P.O. Box 322, 3300 AH Dordrecht, The Netherlands. Fax: (0)78-524474. Tel.: (0)78-524400.*

"Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere."

(Declaration of Philadelphia, ILO Constitution Annex)

Jacques Maillard

MOSCOW, 1992

Created in 1919, the International Labor Organization (ILO) brings together governments, employers and workers of its 160 member States in common action to improve social protection and conditions of life and work throughout the world. The International Labor Office, in Geneva, is the permanent Secretariat of the Organization.